

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 15, 2005

The Honorable Linda Lingle
Governor of Hawai'i
Executive Chambers
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Governor Lingle:

RE: S. 147 and H.R. 309; Federal Recognition for Native Hawaiians

The Hawaii congressional delegation has reintroduced the Native Hawaiian federal recognition bills in the current 109th Congress. We are writing to request that you use your good offices in securing a statement of affirmative support for these bills from President Bush and his administration.

In the previous 108th Congress we tried initially to ensure the administration's neutrality and subsequently to obtain its support of federal recognition. However, in the final days of the 108th Congress, the administration opposed a provision we sought to include in the Fiscal Year 2005 omnibus appropriations bill that would have advanced federal recognition, a provision that both House and Senate Republicans and Democrats were prepared otherwise to accept.

Our view is that federal recognition has a good chance of passing the 109th Congress with administration support, but is unlikely to pass without it. An open statement of support early in this Congress will assure our colleagues of the administration's position and foreclose any contradictory statements or indications at a later time, particularly at key decision making moments, as occurred with the Fiscal Year 2005 omnibus appropriations bill.

The effort to obtain open, affirmative administration support of federal recognition is a joint responsibility that we share with you and the Native Hawaiian community, including the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Given your close relationship with the President and his administration, and the efforts to date of your administration and yourself personally, we believe you have a crucial, indispensable role to play in attaining this important goal.

Thank you for your efforts thus far and for the opportunity to work with you on achieving federal recognition for Native Hawaiians. We look forward to our continuing joint efforts and to success in the 109th Congress.

With aloha,



NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Member of Congress



ED CASE
Member of Congress

cc: U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye
U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka
Office of Hawaiian Affairs Chair Haunani Apoliona